

Zip Dobyns Interview (12/18/80)

By Bill Wrobel



[Note: This talk was transcribed from audio cassette by myself, Bill Wrobel. I also personally attended the session held at Zip's Los Angeles house (the location of many of her local astrology Intensives). Being a "Virgo" astrologer, Zip much preferred the preciseness of her writing style than the "over-the-cuff" spontaneous "Gemini" speaking style. Zip passed away in mid-June 2003. Her daughter, Maritha Pottenger, has given permission to put these verbatim transcriptions (some slight edits) online as a tribute to Zip and her teachings. The material is quite excellent for the very reason of its impromptu spontaneous nature—more, as just given, the *Gemini* style or side of her nature than the written *Virgo* style or side of her nature. Of course I preferred her *Gemini* style! Even in those terms, I much prefer *hearing* Zip on cassette or in person than simply *reading* the transcripts of her *Gemini* style material. I understand that Zip would

sometimes feel a bit frustrated with material from transcriptions of her workshops and talks because of its far more casual speaker style and would prefer to “clean up” the material in her Virgo mode! Be that as it may, I believe the reader will find great value in the material as given. Enjoy!]

INTERVIEW WITH ZIP DOBYNS (Thursday, December 18, 1980)
[Abbreviated text]

Bill Wrobel: “Why don’t you start with how you got involved with astrology.”

Zip Dobyns: “Doing it professionally was very gradual. Initially I was just curious. First I was interested in psychic phenomena. I started attending a spiritualist church, and there I met a man who did astrology. I took a series of classes with him and I was quite intrigued, but still not convinced.. I started doing some charts to see if astrology really did work, and kept on doing it. Eventually it turned out to be a profession.”

Bill: “So you were quite involved in the psychic field before the astrology phase of your life?”

Zip : “Yes. I was actively involved in studying psychic research, everything written about the psychic area--personal experiences, autobiographies, and so on. It was well over a year after I had started intensive reading in that area before I started investigating astrology.”

Bill: “Did you receive a degree in anthropology?”

Zip: “Well, anthropology was actually my second major. I started majoring in history. I have the Mutable Dilemma! Then I took my B.A. in anthropology and did quite a bit of graduate work. But then I got married and had my kids. At that point, I could've gone back into anthropology, but it was right after my last child was born that I had some time on my hands, and by "coincidence" (except there's no such thing as coincidence) somebody gave me a book that opened the door to the psychic interest. And I had previously made an old promise to myself that someday I would look into it. So I started looking into it, and anthropology fell by the wayside!”

Bill: “Are you still writing poetry?”

Zip: “Oh, I still write poetry occasionally. I did lots of it when I was younger, but I haven't written a lot of it since I left Tucson 10 or 11 years ago. When I was still in Tucson I attended a group a couple of times a month, and we had to write a new poem for each meeting. So I was still writing poetry regularly up to 1969 when I came over here [Los Angeles]. Since then, they have been few and far between.”

Bill: “Who inspired and influenced you in your early life and young adulthood?”

Zip: “Well, I was exposed to psychic phenomena and astrology when I was young because my mother was interested. She was always rather psychic herself and had phenomenal experiences, but she had no control over it. Things would just happen to her, sometimes knowledge coming to her and sometimes physical phenomena. She could've been a medium if she had been trained. So I had enough experience of it as a child that I couldn't accept the physical/materialistic world view of science. At the same time, the traditional religious view was not very logical to me either. So I was open to discovering something more--which I finally did through parapsychology and astrology.

Bill: “Zip [chart before him], I see that you have Vesta on your Ascendant, 12th house side. Is astrology where you wanted to accomplish something really well?”

Zip: “Yes. I wanted good astrology. I'm very concerned that we clean up our act in the astrological community and develop more effective and dependable astrology. Everything else in life was for fun, but in astrology I really wanted to see a better job done.”

Bill: “You also have Moon in the first house; Venus, ruling your Taurus rising, in the sign of Cancer; Mars in the Cancer house; sun conjunct Ceres in the 5th house. So a strong motherhood focus?”

Zip: “Yes. Very identified with mothering people. And of course that's a natural for the helping profession, that is, for women who, after the kids are raised, to go into the helping profession and mother people on a wider scale.”

Bill: “Being simplistic here: Which sign of the zodiac would best describe you in your eyes?”

Zip: “Well, everybody is all twelve, so I'm afraid I can't buy into that. I'm very Virgo about astrology, but as you can see, I'm not Virgo when it comes to my house! You can look around and tell that! I am very Taurus and Cancer about the house: it's comfortable and homey, but not neat and clean. I work in a very relaxed way too. I've been known to conduct workshops lying flat on the floor in the middle of the room, looking up at the blackboard!”

Bill: “You also have a fascination with travel?”

Zip: “My chart is dominated by mutables. Everything is either in a mutable sign or mutable house or conjunct a mutable planet. The sole exception is the Midheaven in Aquarius. If you count Vesta as a mutable factor, why that is conjunct the Ascendant. And my insatiable Gemini curiosity is so strong that I like to go everywhere in the world.”

Bill: “I understand that you traveled all of the States at an early age?”

Zip: “Yes. I had been in every state except Hawaii and Alaska—which were not States back then--by 1945 when I was 24 years old. But now I've been to Hawaii a couple of times, and I'm planning to go to Alaska next year. Our family traveled. We'd take off in the summer and wander through several states. We'd camp out in a tent. I had three brothers, and we had a little camper type vehicle that we had in those days which didn't cost a lot like they do now. It was real fun. In some summers we made as many as six or seven new states. My longest triangle extension was my 15th birthday in San Francisco, my 16th in Quebec, and my 17th in Mexico City”.

Bill: “What did you do in your spare time?”

Zip: “Well, I do traveling now, part of it just for fun. After the kids all got out of school, I went to India for a month, and the next year I went to the Philippines to see the psychic surgeons, and then one week in Japan. And last summer [summer of '79] was the Mediterranean summer. This year was the Caribbean, and next year will be Alaska; the year after that will be Australia and New Zealand.”

Bill: "I understand Ronald Reagan has an astrologer he consults."

Zip: "Yes. Carroll Righter is his astrologer, but he doesn't publicize it. He obviously picked the time for Reagan to be inaugurated governor of California with Jupiter in the 10th house. He was sworn in soon after midnight. He claimed he wanted to get an early start in office! Jeanne Dixon encouraged him to run for President, being sure that he would make it. Many public figures who consult astrologers don't make it public because they're afraid of the backlash from the conservative mentality. It's hearsay, but Nixon also had an astrologer."

Bill: "What type of people come to you for consultation?"

Zip: "Mostly I work with people who are interested in psychological insight rather than trying to guess details of what is going to happen."

Bill: "Over the years, what have you learned or had to unlearn about astrology?"

Zip: "Well, one thing that I got out of traditional astrology and later unlearned (found it was wrong) was the notion that an overload of three to five planets in a house would mean that the person is doing that principle to a high degree. Instead I became aware of the possibility to block expression in such an area of too much emphasis. It's very common for it to be blocked instead of it being something the person is doing to a high degree. Overdoing it is very possible, but very often it can be blocked or repressed. This is particularly the case with the 10th house and the 1st house. I remember doing charts where I assumed they would be trying to over-control the world, but instead they were very repressed and over-controlled themselves; assumed they would be very assertive, but instead they were very self-conscious and inhibited. So that is one of the things I had to learn from experience, and that was not taught in traditional books."

Bill: "You emphasize how many astrologers try to guess details instead of giving principles behind the details."

Zip: "Yes. Originally, of course, I was taught that you should be able to guess the details, but I've long since gave up on that! Realize that if you can help the person understand the principle and give a range of options, then that person can choose the more positive details. The horoscope is a model

of reality that tries to pick out salient features, but a model is only that--a simplified representation, not final truth. It does not spell out all the details. It's always up to us what we do with the basic principles.”

Bill: “Would you say that the relationship/sexual area is the most requested area of interests to clients?”

Zip: “It's certainly one of them but not the only one. Many people are struggling in the area of relationships, but also many people are struggling to find work that is really fulfilling, that doesn't bore them, that challenges them and offers some interest, variety and idealism. And we still get a fair number of people who also have health problems, struggling with something wrong with the body. But certainly working on personal relationships is an area of high interest.”

Bill: “What are your comments on our high divorce rate? Is quite a lot of it a part of the freedom/closeness dilemma (as you put it in your lectures), a part of the power issue, or a part of idealism?”

Zip: “All of the above! A lot of it is because people are demanding more of relationships. They simply won't put up with what people used to live with. They used to just stay in a marriage: If they make their bed, they lay in it, and maybe look for some kind of satisfaction outside of the marriage to give them what they didn't get in the marriage. Nowadays people want more from their marriage and will leave it rather than put up with an unsatisfactory relationship. And sometimes they want more than any human relationship can offer! So they go on looking for that more perfect ideal where someone will give them exactly what they wanted, and that never happens. Then there's also very commonly still a tendency for women to initially marry a man who they think is strong, and later find some of their own strengths and want a more equalitarian relationship and find they can't have it easily, so they have to leave the marriage to be able to express their own strengths.”

Bill: “Do you practice electional or personal event astrology yourself?”

Zip: “Very rarely. Usually I don't pay much attention to what transits are doing. For example, February is our month for doing our Intensives, and we have it every February regardless of what the planets are doing. And I frequently will fly once or twice a week for months and I never pay any attention to what the planets are doing at flight time.”

Bill: "What would you like to see happen in the future regarding the practice of astrology?"

Zip: "I would like to see more of what's coming now: Astrologers working with professional psychotherapists, using charts as a diagnostic tool, and helping astrologers understand clients. This can speed the process of healing often. Most psychotherapists are not going to want to take the time to really learn astrology thoroughly, and most astrologers are not going to be able to take the time to get a PhD in psychology! But it would be a natural partnership for each one to help the other."

Bill: "Are you going to write an autobiography some day?"

Zip: "No. It's not my style. Besides, I forget the past as soon as it's past. I really do have a very poor memory with the past. I'm looking ahead all the time and living now. I never kept a journal. The only reason I remember the dates of some of the major events in my life is because I have tested them out in different astrology systems. Other than that, if it's gone, it's gone."

Bill: "Do you prefer to go on lecture tours over writing?"

Zip: "I like variety with my mutable dilemma. I like writing. I like some lecturing, some traveling, some personal counseling, some research with asteroids, etc. I would not be happy if I had to do any one thing all the time."

Bill: "What do you perceive your future to be?"

Zip: "Oh, I expect to just go on doing what I'm doing, to perhaps have a little more time for writing and research. I would like eventually to be part of a real school of astrology in order to teach over a period of time; you know, a two or three year course where people really learn astrology and psychology, learning to become proficient and not try to cram it all in a one or two week period!"

Bill: "Do you conceptualize astrology as a spiritual function?"

Zip: "I see it as a psychological/spiritual system, a way of conceptualizing the world to help us to understand ourselves and handle life more effectively. Astrology is not just Sun sign astrology, and the planets are not

doing anything to us except to hold up the mirror to let us see what we're doing. This is just one of many models to conceptualize human life, and it's a very useful one. That's all we can ask of a model: that it be useful and helpful.

“At any rate, I do think we can see the meaning or principles, but I do not think we can specify the details much of the time. A person with both astrological knowledge and psychic ability can probably do a lot better on the details. Yet there's also a question whether that's going to be helpful to the person. If you give them a specific detail, it is bound to give them the impression that it had to happen that way, that there wasn't any choice about it,, that they couldn't have done anything different, and they never get a chance to really understand themselves and see how they could've grown.

“So I prefer to stick to the principles and give a range of possible details. You don't know how many times I've been glad I did that, because even when I thought I knew the detail, I turned out to be wrong when the person gave me feedback. So it is really risky to assume details. If you give a range of possibilities around the principle, help them understand the psychological principle that they're dealing with, then they can choose the more positive details.

“Now: I firmly believe that nothing in astrology has to be negative. It's always what we *do* with a given principle. Everything principle has positive or painful alternatives. There is nothing that is automatically good or bad. So you can do something positive with every single pattern. It is true that we cannot really change the world all that much; we can only change ourselves. But if we change ourselves, and become a more together, spiritual, loving, trusting person, then we set an example for the people around us--and hopefully they can move in that direction too. All we can do is set a good example, and notice when they move in the right direction. That's called positive reinforcement.”

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Bill Wrobel Sunday 2021-1-24